Batheaston Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting of Batheaston Parish Council 7:15pm on Tuesday 14th January 2020

Present: Councillors James Jeffery (Chairman), Derek Greener (Vice-Chairman), Catherine McCarthy, Catherine Gregory, Hannah Hughes, Andrew Jeffryes, Andrew Lea, Alexis Pavlou, Matt Tovey.

In attendance: Richard Maccabee (Clerk) and 4 members of the Public

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1. Apologies for absence

1.1. Councillor Patrick Vandesteen.

1.2. It was also noted that Ms. Gisela Gruber had hoped to attend, and sign the Declaration of Acceptance, but had been called away at the last minute.

2. Declarations of interest from Councillors.

2.1. Councillor Day, Item 7.1, planning permission 20/00106/FUL: personal friendship with the applicant.

2.2. Councillor McCarthy, Item 17: Councillor McCarthy is a trustee of the Batheaston New Village Hall Trust (BNHVT).

3. Minutes of Previous Meetings

3.1. The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 14th January 2020 were duly approved and signed by the Chairman.

3.2. The minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on Tuesday 21st January 2020 were duly approved and signed by the Chairman.

4. Membership of Working Groups

4.1. The Chairman invited Councillors, especially those who have recently joined the Council, to consider volunteering to join Working Groups that are in need of additional help.

4.2. The two priorities groups were identified as the Neighbourhood Plan, which has been in a state of near-completion, but needs some re-drafting to meet the requirements of BANES, and Communications, which was identified by Councillors as a priority in recent discussions of the Precept for 2020/21.

4.3. Councillor Tovey volunteered to join the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group.

4.4. Councillors Jeffryes and Lea volunteered to join the Communications Working Group.

4.5. Councillor Hughes and Lea volunteered to join the Play Area Working Group.

4.6. The Clerk will send the updated list of working group membership on this basis.

Clerk

5. Public Participation regarding matters on this agenda.

5.1. In support of Item 6, Rowing Proposal

5.1.1. Mr. Peter Lander attended to support the proposal that he made to the Council.

5.1.2. He described his long-standing passion for rowing, and his experience as a rower and as a coach over many years. He has previously run a club with particular success in engaging juniors and women. He has the necessary accreditation to establish the club, and would take personal responsibility for safety.

5.1.3. He noted that club previously based on the river to the East of Bath had moved to Newbridge, which is too far to travel from Batheaston, especially for juniors.

5.1.4. He has been in contact with the Canal and Rivers Trust, and established that rowing would be acceptable from a base at Batheaston, but not substantially lower, towards the City Centre.

5.1.5. Our Ward Councillors, Councillors Guy and Warren, had expressed strong support for the idea.

5.1.6. He indicated that he would be able to provide all necessary equipment, at his cost, and under his responsibility. This would include landing stages, and a compound for the boats and a coaching launch. The latter would be of the order of 15m x 10m, constructed of strong wire mesh fencing.

5.1.7. The Chairman thanked Mr and Mrs Lander for their time.

5.2. Planning Application 20/00106/FUL

5.2.1. Ms. Helen Harker of Llewellyn Harker Ltd attended to describe this application. It is to build a two-bedroom cottage on farmland, at Orchard Spring, Church Lane.

5.2.2. This cottage is intended for Mr Mark Tayler, who also attended the meeting. He is the son of the farm owners, and works on the farm. He expects to take on the management of the farm at some point in the future.

5.2.3. In preliminary discussions with BANES Planning Officers, they have indicated that while new build would not normally be allowed on this land, it is permitted subject to an agricultural tie; such that it can only be occupied by a rural worker.

5.2.4. Ms Harker described the proposed building. It will be small; with a footprint of 10m x 6.5m, set low in the ground, and not break the skyline. It will be built using stone, to match local properties.

5.2.5. The Chairman thanked Ms Harker and Mr Tayler for their time.

6. Rowing Proposal

6.1. Councillor Lea endorsed Mr. Lander's description of the proposal and indicated that he saw this as potentially positive development.

6.2. He explained that the key question for the Council was to determine if it has a suitable location for the storage unit required. The initial thought is that it would fit well behind the Electricity Substation, adjacent to the boundary with London Road.

6.3. This space is currently unused, and its use would not inconvenience current users of the Riverside Area to site the storage unit there. It gives the necessary easy access to the river, and to the public toilets and to a water supply.

6.4. Furthermore, in due course it might be possible to convert one of the unused room in the Riverside Toilet Block for use as a changing room.

6.5. He explained that Mr Lander understood that the Council could not at this stage contribute funds, nor compensate him in the case of theft or vandalism.

6.6. He noted however that there is CCTV nearby, which the Council may choose to extend to cover this space.

6.7. Mr Lander was asked when rowing could start if the go-ahead is given now. He indicated that he hoped it would be possible by Whitsun weekend (at the end of May) 2020.

6.8. It was noted that this land in leased to the Council from BANES. It will be necessary to verify that such use does not violate the terms of this lease. Similarly, if in due course there is a change of use of the toilet block.

Clerk

6.9. **Council supported** Mr Lander's proposal, and asked Councillor Lea to take it forward with Mr Lander, representatives of BANES and the Clerk, with a view to bringing forward specific proposals in due course**.**

Councillor Lea

7. Planning Applications

7.1. The Council considered the following applications:

Application Type: Full Application
Site Location: Orchard Spring Church Lane Batheaston Bath BA1 7EF
Description of Proposal: Construction of two bedroom rural worker's cottage on farmland
Name of Applicant: Mr & Mrs Tayler
Reference Number: 20/00106/FUL Case Officer: Rae Mepham

It was resolved not to oppose this Planning Application, noting that it would be important that it was subject to the Agricultural Tie, and was enforced in future.

Clerk

Application Type: Full Application
Site Location: 278 High Street Batheaston Bath BA1 7RA
Description of Proposal: Erection of single storey rear extension to replace existing, minor alterations to rear internal stair and removal of pergola.
Name of Applicant: Mr & Mrs Laville
Reference Number: 20/00198/FUL Case Officer: Helen Ellison

It was resolved not to oppose this Planning Application

Clerk

Application Type: Listed Building Consent (Alts/exts)
Site Location: 278 High Street Batheaston Bath BA1 7RA
Description of Proposal: Internal and external work to facilitate the erection of single storey rear extension to replace existing, minor alterations to rear internal stair and removal of pergola.
Name of Applicant: Mr & Mrs Laville
Reference Number: 20/00199/LBA Case Officer: Helen Ellison

It was resolved not to oppose this Planning Application

Clerk

Application Type: Full Application
Site Location: Woodbine Gardens Bannerdown Road Batheaston Bath BA1 8EG
Description of Proposal: Erection of two storey side extension and retrofit of existing property
Name of Applicant: Mr A Thorne
Reference Number: 20/00220/FUL Case Officer: Anna Jotcham

It was resolved not to oppose this Planning Application

Clerk

The following decisions by B&NES were noted: -

Application Type: Full Application
Site Location: Batheaston Methodist Church Northend Batheaston Bath
Description of Proposal: Demolition of 1960s two storey extension and pre-school building and conversion of chapel (Use Class D1) and outbuildings into single dwelling (Use Class C3) together with replacement extension, re-modelling of carpark entrance and pedestrian gateway
Name of Applicant: Mr & Mrs Stockton
Application Number: 19/04889/FUL Case Officer: Helen Ellison
Decision: PERMIT

Application Type: Listed Building Consent (Alts/exts)
Site Location: Eagle House 71 Northend Batheaston Bath
Description of Proposal: Internal and external alterations for the proposed restoration and renovation works to include alterations to basement floor, reinstating blocked windows, stone cleaning, replacing basement staircase, reinstating railings and displaying Suffragette memorial, regrading garden and reinstating pennant flag path.
Name of Applicant: Eagle House Northend Ltd
Application Number: 19/05360/LBA Case Officer: Caroline Waldron
Decision: CONSENT

Application Type: Full Application
Site Location: Oakwood 26 High Bannerdown Batheaston Bath BA1 7JZ
Description of Proposal: Erection of detached double garage.
Name of Applicant: Mr Swash
Application Number: 19/05432/FUL Case Officer: Isabel Daone
Decision: PERMIT

Application Type: Listed Building Consent (Alts/exts)
Site Location: First Floor Flat 248 High Street Batheaston Bath
Description of Proposal: Internal and external alterations for the installation of a new boiler and associated new flue and additional waste water pipework.
Name of Applicant: Miss Bradley
Application Number: 19/05524/LBA Case Officer: Wendy Tomlinson
Decision: CONSENT.

8. Accounts

8.1. The Clerk presented the accounts for the Year-to-date to the end of January 2020.

8.2. He noted that he will review the format and reporting of finances, to make clearer the nature and phasing of spend and income, to come into effect in the new financial year, from April.

8.3. Nevertheless, he commented that the current cash position is reasonably healthy, at approximately £45,000. He noted that there is no expectation of substantial income for the remainder of this year, and therefore it can be expected that this figure will reduce to approximately £40,000 by the end of the Financial Year (31st March).

8.4. Councillors expressed some concern that some of the coding of costs in the past had been erroneous.

8.5. **Council approved** the accounts.

9. Maintenance of Trees

9.1. Councillor Gregory outlined the need for spend on the following items**:**

9.1.1. For Nick Cooper to trim Lime hedge (£150) and Prunus trees (£35), total £185.

9.1.2. She noted that it is important this be done at this point in the year, before this year's growth.

9.1.3. For Wessex Rural Crafts to complete work identified in the tree report as requiring attention within 6 months (£2,100)

9.2. **Council approved** the funds requested.

Councillor Gregory

10. Precept

10.1. It was noted that the Precept had been set at £50,400, and that this had been duly submitted to BANES.

10.2. Catherine Gregory presented the draft budget to deliver the identified priorities within the agreed Precept.

10.2.1. She thanked those Councillors who had submitted estimates for budget requirements for Working Groups, and also her fellow members of the Precept Working Group, Councillors Tovey and Vandesteen.

10.2.2. She explained the underlying assumptions in the budget, including that the Council will continue to give grant funding to local organizations including the Youth Club at the same level as currently.

10.2.3. She explained the way in which the budget had been constructed:

- Overheads: costs that are required for day-to-day running, of which staff salaries represent the most significant element, at approximately £27.5k staff cost.
- Discretionary revenue spend: non-capital spend that the Council may wish to make during the year, as well as income that is not guaranteed, but for which there is a reasonable probability of securing.

- Funding to devote to Capital Expenditure, which by virtue of unlocking funds such as Public Works Loans, will allow the Council to pursue major investments in projects such as the Green Corridor.

10.2.4. She noted that there was a reasonable expectation of securing a refund for VAT spent in this and the previous two years, although this is understood to be capped at £7,500.

10.2.5. She also commented that the Council might consider registering for VAT, possibly only for the duration of the major investments, as this might be advantageous.

10.3. Councillor Gregory commented that the Council will need the help of additional people, bringing both time and skills to achieve the ambitions that the budget is intended to fund.

10.4. It was noted that it was important to communicate the decision to raise the Precept in a positive and proactive manner. It should set the context clearly, and give an indication of the plans for the investments.

10.4.1. Councillors were confident that the Council compares favourably with other, similar Parishes in the BANES area. It was however noted that any calculation of averages is not meaningful, as Bath City does not have Parish Councils, and sets a nominal £5 Precept.

10.4.2. It was felt that the Council could offer a piece on the Precept to the "Local Look" magazine

Councillor Gregory

10.5. In summary Councillor Gregory stressed that the budget is very tight, and there will be a need for tight management of costs. She said that she and her fellow members of the Precept Working Group thought that it was important to establish a formal Finance Committee to provide this focus and detailed oversight.

10.5.1. She presented the proposed Terms of Reference, and noted the following:

- As a formal Committee of the Council this will be an open and public meeting, with published agendas and minutes.
- It will meet at least once every quarter. It is envisaged that it will meet more frequently initially.

10.5.2. It was noted that this Committee has delegated authority for the responsible and prudent management of the Council's resources. It does not however have delegated authority to make decisions on the application of these resources; these are to be referred to full Council Meetings.

10.5.3. The Terms of Reference require a membership of five Councillors. Catherine Gregory noted that she and her two fellow members of the Precept Working Group, Councillors Tovey and Vandesteen, volunteer to be members.

10.5.4. Councillor Pavlou and Councillor Lea also volunteered.

10.6. **Council approved** the establishment of the Finance Committee, and requested Catherine Gregory to liaise with the Clerk to establish it.

Councillor Gregory / Clerk

11. Management Software

11.1. Councillor Jeffryes outlined the problems that arise from the lack of adequate software to manage the Council's finances. These include: a lack of traceability for purchases (the matching of invoices to purchase orders); the difficulties in indicating and analysing the nature of spend, for instance proportion is spent on maintenance of assets; and the ability to forecast accurately spend against budget.

11.2. He indicated that there are software packages which have been developed specifically for the use of Parish Councils. These are relatively cheap, to meet the needs of this market.

11.3. He outlined his own experience in selecting, implementing and managing software, albeit of a significantly larger scale. The Clerk would be closely involved as the principal user of any software that was selected. Councillor Jeffryes made clear that he was not seeking approval at this stage to procure such software.

11.4. **Council approved** his proposal to conduct a review.

Councillor Jeffryes

12. Parking

12.1. Councillor Jeffrey introduced the item. Progress had halted at the point of agreeing the contract with SMART Parking Ltd, when a number of issues with the draft they had presented were identified.

12.2. This lack of progress has caused frustration to Councillors and Residents alike; the need to bring this to a resolution is urgent.

12.3. Councillors made clear that the contract must not expose the Council to undue risk, and that there needs to a reasonable degree of assurance of this. In the absence of this, the contract cannot be signed.

12.4. It was noted that SMART Parking had indicated a great deal of flexibility in the way they would implement the arrangements, but that it was important such reassurance was embodied in the contract.

12.5. It was noted that the contract needs to be well drafted, to clearly and unambiguously set out the mutual responsibilities of the parties, etc. It is also important that it puts into effect the desired outcomes, which relies on their being a clear understanding of these: the rules which the Council wishes to put in place, including for instance the fines, treatment of special cases ("whitelisting", etc.). This latter might best be summarised as a document outlining the Council's requirements.

12.6. The following actions were agreed

12.6.1. The current draft of the contract to be circulated

Councillor Jeffrey

12.6.2. The Parking Working Group to seek to summarise the requirements for the contract to implement.

Councillor Jeffrey

12.6.3. Councillors to consider whether there is a resident with suitable skills who can provide advice initially in respect of the contract.

All Councillors

13. Good Friday celebrations in the Secret Garden

13.1. Councillor Lea, who leads the Riverside Working Group, introduced this item. He said that the council had received a request from the Revd Elizabeth Bennett, Associate Priest of Batheaston with St Catherine. She is proposing to conduct a service in the Secret Garden, at the end of which to erect a cross, which will be left in place until Easter Monday.

13.2. A number of concerns were raised: that of appearing to endorse the Christian Faith over others; the practical issues of carrying the cross, and of erecting it securely and safely in the Gardens.

13.3. **It was agreed** to accede to this request, making clear the need for these issues to be properly addressed, and that the position of the cross must be agreed with either Councillor Lea or Councillor Gregory.

Councillor Lea

14. Streetlights – Maintenance Contract

14.1. The Council received a report from the Clerk outlining his recent discussions with Parish Clerks of Councils in a similar position to that of Batheaston, and with BANES.

14.2. **Council approved** his proposals to seek to join with other Councils in seeking a new contract based on that which BANES have recently let with Volker Highways.

Clerk

15. Commemorative Bench

15.1. **Council noted** the request for the installation of a bench on the football pitch to commemorate the Former Goalkeeper of the Batheaston Football Team. They indicated their support for this idea.

16. Bathampton Meadows Alliance

16.1. Councillor Lea briefed the Council on a recent meeting of the Bathampton Meadows Alliance, of which he is a member. He indicated that BANES is in discussion with the National Trust with a view to handing over the stewardship of the Meadows to the Trust. He noted that this would be a positive development, ensuring the maintenance of the Meadows as a place of wildlife and recreation.

16.2. **Council endorsed** this view.

17. The Batheaston New Village Hall

17.1. Councillor Lea briefed the Council on the status of this development as he understands it. The Batheaston New Village Hall Trust (BNVHT) is proceeding with its plans to build a new village hall without yet having secured sufficient funds to complete the building project.

17.2. He asked the Council to reaffirm its position in discussions at its meetings of 24 September 2019 and 8 October 2019 that for legal and financial reasons it cannot contribute funds to this project.

17.3. He noted that the Council remains enthusiastic about the creation of a new centre for the community, and reiterates its invitation to BNVHT to evaluate jointly options on Council land that would allow BNVHT and the Council to pool financial resources for greater benefit to our community. The Council asks the BNVHT to take note of its plans to progress the "Green Corridor" recreation ground and facilities.

17.4. **Council endorsed** this view.

The meeting closed at 9:38 pm, and remaining items were deferred.

Forthcoming Meetings

Parish Council Meeting, 7:15pm on Tuesday 10th March 2020
Annual Village Meeting, 7:15pm on Tuesday 7th April 2020
Parish Council Meeting, 7:15pm on Tuesday 14th April 2020

All meetings are held in the Rhymes Pavilion
Parish Council Meetings are open meetings; members of the public are welcome to attend and may speak by invitation.
Residents are especially invited to the Annual Village Meeting.

Signed……. Dated…….